

SOUTH AFRICAN RADIO LEAGUE NEWS FOR SUNDAY 03 DECEMBER 2017

Good morning and welcome to the weekly news bulletin of the South African Radio League read by [your name, call sign and QTH]

You may tune in to the South African Radio League news bulletin on Sunday mornings, at 08:15 Local Time in Afrikaans and at 08:30 Local Time in English, on HF as well as on many VHF and UHF repeaters around the country. Echolink listeners may connect to ZS0JPL for a relay. A podcast is available from the League's web site.

Audio and text bulletins may be downloaded from the League website at www.sarl.org.za where you can also sign up to receive future bulletins by e-mail.

It is with deep regret that the passing of two radio amateurs must be announced

On Wednesday 22 November, the key of Des Mullen, ZS5DDM, went silent after a heart attack. He was a committee member of MARC and an active Hamnet member and will be missed by all who knew him.

On Monday 27 November, the key of Jumelle Bruyns, ZS1JEB, went silent after a fairly long illness.

We extend our sincere condolences to their families and friends

PAUSE

In the new today:

THE SARL DIGITAL CONTEST THIS AFTERNOON

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAUNA AND FLORA PROGRAMME

and

SLOW SCAN TV FROM SPACE

Stay tuned for more information on these and other interesting news items.

NARC CLOSED FOR THE FESTIVE SEASON

The National Amateur Radio Centre will close on Friday 15 December 2017 for the Festive Season and reopen on Monday 8 January 2018. Any enquires during this period can be sent to the SARL Secretary at secretary@sarl.org.za

THE SARL DIGITAL CONTEST THIS AFTERNOON

This afternoon from 13:00 to 16:00 UTC, you can participate in the last digital contest as well as the last local contest of 2017. The aim of the SARL Digital contest is to establish as many contacts as possible between radio amateurs in Southern Africa using the PSK31 / RTTY mode(s). The contest is open to all radio amateurs in Southern Africa.

Activity takes place on 80, 40 and 20 metres PSK31 at the lower end and RTTY at the upper end of the specified frequencies. Please note that USB must be used always. A station may be contacted once on RTTY and once on PSK31 per band.

The exchange is a RSQ report plus a sequential serial number starting at 001. QSOs with stations in Southern Africa are worth 3 points and 1 point for QSOs outside this area. The first contact with each area listed below will be used as a band multiplier. Area 1 to 6 is ZS1 to ZS6; Area 7 is 3DA, 7P, 7Q, 9J, C9, A2, D2, V5, Z2, ZD7, ZD9, ZS7, ZS8, FR, 3B8, 5R, FH and D6 and Area 8 is stations in the rest of the world. Logs, in ADIF, Cabrillo or MS Excel format and labelled "your call sign Digital Contest," must be submitted by 10 December 2017 by e-mail to contest@sarl.org.za.

THE SOUTHERN AFRICAN FAUNA AND FLORA PROGRAMME

Where are you going to for your December holiday? To one of the game parks or nature reserves in Southern Africa? At present there are 512 parks in seven Southern African countries registered - Swaziland, Lesotho, Botswana, Mozambique, Namibia, Zimbabwe and South Africa. Visit the SAFF web site at <https://ffzs.wordpress.com/> to get a list of the participating parks with their reference numbers, the rules for participating can also be found on the web site.

How do I activate a park? To activate a park, you and all your equipment (this includes the antenna) need to be within the perimeters of the park - a portable or a mobile station. The minimum exchange is your call sign and the reference number of the park - e.g. 7P8DG 7PFF-0001.

Activators - you must make 10 QSO s to claim the park towards an activator award, you can make the 10 QSO s over several days. Activity is always valid for chasers, regardless of the number of QSO s - so always send us your log! You can only work from one reference at a time - so if you are in a park that is a sub-region of a larger park you can only use the reference of the sub-region.

Download a copy of the SAFF Rules or read the article on page 12 to 17 of the December 2017 issue of Radio ZS, there is a link on the front page of the League's web site and get active from a fauna and flora site.

HF NOISE MONITORING PROJECT WORKGROUP FORMED

At the SARL/AMSAT SA SDR workshop held at the NARC on 18 November 2017 an initial workgroup was formed to support and plan the SARL HF Noise monitoring project. Members of the group are Hans van de Groenendaal, ZS6AKV, Dick Coates, ZS6BUN, Tamsana Semele, ZS6MOZ, Anton Janovsky, ZR6AIC, Brian Jacobs, ZS6YZ, and Nico van Rensburg, ZS6QL.

The next Gauteng SDR workshop is planned at the NARC for 20 January 2018. The Cape Town date will be announced soon. A workshop in the Durban area is also under consideration.

SLOW SCAN TV FROM SPACE ON 5 AND 6 DECEMBER

The 145.800 MHz FM Slow Scan Television (SSTV) transmissions from the International Space Station on the 5 and 6 December should be receivable by radio amateurs around the world. The MAI-75 SSTV system in the Russian Service Module will be put through some extended testing from the 5 December starting around 15:00 UTC and running until 09:00 UTC on 6 December. Test images will be used during this period. This will provide near global coverage if all works well on 145.800 MHz FM. In the past images have been sent using the SSTV mode PD180, with a 3-minute off time between each image.

All you need to do to receive SSTV pictures direct from the space station is to connect the audio output of a scanner or amateur radio transceiver via a simple interface to the soundcard on a Windows PC or an Apple iOS device and tune in to 145.800 MHz FM. You can even receive pictures by holding a cell phone next to the radio loudspeaker. The ISS puts out a strong signal on 145.800 MHz FM and a 2-m handheld with a 1/4 wave antenna should be enough to receive it. Many FM rigs can be switched between wide and narrow deviation FM filters. For best results you should select the filter for wider FM deviation. Handhelds all seem to have a single wide filter fitted as standard.

You are listening to a news bulletin of the South African Amateur Radio League.

THE ARRL 10 METRE CONTEST NEXT WEEKEND

The ARRL 10 metre contest, with SSB and phone activity, takes place from 00:00 UTC on Saturday 9 December until 23:59 UTC on Sunday 10 December 2017. Stations in the USA (including Hawaii and Alaska) and Canada will send a RS or RST report and state or province, stations in Mexico will send a RS or RST report and their state, DX stations send a RS or RST report and a sequential serial number starting with 001 while maritime mobile stations send a RS or RST report and the ITU Region (R1, R2 or R3). Find the complete set of rules at www.arrl.org/10-meter

DECEMBER MONTH OFFERS EXCEPTIONAL PROPAGATION CONDITIONS ON 50 MHz.

The 50 MHz band is renowned for excelling on most propagation modes, except Tropospheric propagation, which is the domain of 144 MHz. Strong Sporadic-E openings are possible during December as well as in January over distances up to 2 500 km, even on low power. These Es-openings may last for about half an hour or so but cannot be predicted. So, you will have to keep a daily eye on distant 50 MHz beacons, bearing in mind that there is a skip distance around 600 km on 50 MHz, and about 900 km on 144 MHz.

A few days before summer solstice in the southern hemisphere (21 December 2017), about a week later or so, it could be possible to work DX on 50 MHz from South Africa in the mornings with New Zealand and Australia, and in the afternoons with South America such as Brazil. Short-path Summer Solstice Propagation (SSSP) was first discovered by JE1BMJ of Japan when in 2006 he worked many European stations on 50 MHz during their northern hemisphere

summer solstice in June.

The Geminids are considered one of the best meteor showers every year because the individual meteors are bright, and the peak can see meteors stream across the sky at rates as high as 120 meteors an hour. This famous and bright meteor shower will peak on the night of 13 December and morning of 14 December 2017 and provide excellent analogue MS contacts on 50 MHz including digital contacts on 144 MHz. Since the holiday season is almost upon us, consider taking portable VHF equipment with you on holiday, and try and work some long-distance stations on VHF while sitting around the braai fire at night.

RESULTS OF THE ALL AFRICA DX CONTEST

Geoff Levey ZS6C, has notified that the results of this contest are available on the SARL website.

AWA ANNUAL GENERAL MEETING

At the AGM of the Antique Wireless Association held on Saturday 18 November 2017, the following committee was elected for 2018.

President John Watson, ZS1WJ Vice President Renato Bordin, ZS6REN Sec/PRO Andy Cairns, ZS6ADY Technical Advisor Rad Handfield-Jones, ZS6RAD Historian Oliver Gerondeanos, ZS6OG Member Jacques Scholtz, ZS6JPS

The outgoing President Jacques ZS6JPS thanked the committee and members for all the help and assistance over his 2-year tenure and wished the new committee all the best for the coming year.

PROPAGATION REPORT

Hannes Coetzee, ZS6BZP, reports that the solar activity is expected to be at very low levels. There is currently only a single sunspot visible. If you want to do your own frequency predictions, the expected effective sunspot number for the week will be around one. The 15 to 30 metre bands will provide lots of DX fun. Please visit the website spaceweather.sansa.org.za for further information.

Finally, a Diary of some upcoming events:

This afternoon the SARL Digital Contest. 9 10 December the ARRL 10 Meter Contest 15 December the SARL Office closes 1 January start of the ARRL International Grid Chase and the 2018 CQ Marathon 8 January NARC opens 20 January SDR Workshop at the NARC 30 January closing date for proposals and synopses for AMSAT SA Symposium papers 31 January closing date for nominations for Council and SARL Awards and for AGM motions

To conclude our bulletin a quick overview of our main news item:

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Southern Africa using the PSK31 / RTTY mode(s). The contest is open to all radio amateurs in Southern Africa.

This concludes our bulletin for this morning.

Clubs and individuals are invited to submit news items of interest to radio amateurs and shortwave listeners, if possible, in both English and Afrikaans, by following the news inbox link on the South African Radio League web page. News items for inclusion in the bulletin should reach the news team no later than the Thursday preceding the bulletin date.

You are welcome to join us every Sunday morning for the weekly amateur radio program, 'Amateur Radio Today' at 10:00 Central African Time. The program can be heard on VHF and UHF repeaters countrywide and on 7 082 kHz lower side-band and on 7 205 kHz and 17 760 kHz AM. There is also a podcast available from Dick Stratford, ZS6RO. A rebroadcast can be heard on Monday evenings at 18:30 Central African Time on 4 895 kHz AM.

We welcome your signal reports, comments and suggestions; please send these by e-mail to artoday@sarl.org.za. Sentech sponsors the radio transmissions on the non-amateur frequencies.

You have listened to a news bulletin compiled by Andy Cairns, ZS6ADY, edited by Dick Stratford, ZS6RO, and read by

From the news team, best wishes for the week ahead.

/EX